



State of Maryland Executive Department

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Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Anthony Brown  
Lieutenant Governor

Dolores Briones  
Executive Director

April 7, 2008

**To Group Home Providers**

Re: Outcomes Evaluation Effective July 1, 2008

Since 2004, the Governor's Office for Children (GOC) has been coordinating with Departments of Human Resources (DHR), Juvenile Services (DJS), Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a system of outcome evaluation for children in out-of-home placement, as mandated by HB 1146 from the 2004 legislative session. Effective July 1, 2008, a system for outcomes evaluation will be implemented as required in the Human Services Article § 8-1002(g), initiated as House Bill 53 and Senate Bill 177 from the 2007 legislative session. This statute requires participation by all residential child care programs whose rates are established by the Interagency Rates Committee.

The law mandates that the system for outcomes evaluation use standardized measures of the following eight outcomes<sup>1</sup>:

1. Protection from harm while in out-of-home placement;
2. Stability of living environment;
3. Family situation and efforts to treat and counsel the family unit;
4. Educational and vocational development;
5. Job skills and employment readiness;
6. Legal and appropriate use of drugs and alcohol;
7. Progress in learning positive, non-aggressive behavioral habits; and
8. Delinquency status.

To accomplish this, a large stakeholders group consisting of representatives of the above State agencies, providers and universities met on a regular basis from August 2007 through March 2008. The group reviewed a list of over 31 indicators, as well as standardized measurement tools, including the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS).

This system will adopt the use of the Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Tool, developed by the Buddin Praed Foundation

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<sup>1</sup> Enclosed is the Outcomes, Indicators and Measurement document.

([www.buddinpraed.org](http://www.buddinpraed.org)). According to the Maryland CANS Certification and Resource Center “The CANS has three primary uses—as a decision support tool, a quality improvement tool and as an outcome monitoring tool. As an assessment tool, the CANS can be used by child and family teams to develop a plan of care. As a quality improvement tool, the CANS can be used with the Treatment Fidelity Index to determine if the strengths and needs identified are incorporated into the plan of care. As an outcome monitoring tool, the CANS may be used by the larger systems of care to track aggregate improvement by children and families on the entire tool or on a particular domain of the tool.”

“The CANS is being used in jurisdictions throughout Maryland, and is recommended for use in several Children’s Cabinet-funded systems of care initiatives. While there are several highly regarded assessment tools available, the CANS was adopted based in part on its appropriateness for use with children from ages 0-18, its ease of administration (after receipt of training), the utility of the dimension scores in developing a profile of strengths and needs, and its accessibility (both cost and manual availability).”

#### ***Administration of the CANS:***

It is the responsibility of the group home provider to ensure that at least one person on staff is certified to administer the CANS. It is recommended that case managers or clinicians be certified. We encourage you to start the certification process as soon as possible. Only those individuals who have been certified by John Lyons, Ph.D. or by the University of Maryland Innovations Institute may administer the CANS. Training and certification may be obtained free of charge through the website: <http://www.cans.umaryland.edu/>. CANS administrators must have a current certification on file that is made available to the State upon request.

Group home providers will be required to administer the “initial” CANS assessment on each newly admitted youth within the first 30 days of admission, every 3 months after initial assessment and upon discharge. For youth in placement on July 1, 2008, the “initial-other” CANS assessment must be administered based on the schedule below, every 3 months after initial-other assessment and upon discharge.

<b><u>Youth Month of Entry (any year)</u></b>	<b><u>CANS Assessment Month</u></b>
July, October, January, April	July 2008
August, November, February, May	August 2008
September, December, March, June	September 2008

#### ***System Selection and Pilot Testing:***

The web based electronic system selected for this process will be made available to a cross section of providers in late May for pilot testing. Training for all providers will be conducted in mid June. Additional information relating to training will be provided at a later date.

***Minimum technical requirements:***

Providers will need to have a laptop or personal computer equipped with minimum technical requirements including Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5.5 or later (not Netscape) installed on a computer (PC or Mac) that connects to the Internet. For Mac, version 5.0 or later is required. Internet connectivity may be a PC/Mac modem connection or any faster Internet connection. JavaScript and cookies must be enabled. Internet Explorer security settings should be set to medium; otherwise, the website address will need to be added to the list of Trusted Sites with lower security settings.

***What to expect on or after July 1, 2008:***

1. Log onto the identified system.
2. Complete a referral for all youth in placement on July 1<sup>st</sup> and every youth admitted thereafter.
3. Admit youth into placement and complete initial CANS assessment.
4. Periodically update the youth's information.
5. Complete the discharge CANS assessment and discharge the youth from placement when necessary.

Placement vacancy will be immediately available to agency staff based on youth admission and discharge.

Additional information regarding this process will be forthcoming as other elements are finalized. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Shelley Tinney ([stinney@goc.state.md.us](mailto:stinney@goc.state.md.us) or 410-767-2547) of the Governor's Office for Children.

Sincere Regards,



Dolores Briones,  
Executive Director  
Governor's Office for  
Children



Brenda Donald,  
Secretary  
Department of Human  
Resources



Donald DeVore,  
Secretary  
Department of Juvenile  
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Attachment